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REMARKS

Applicants wish to thank the Examiner for the careful consideration given this application. Claims 1-7 are pending in this Application. Claims 2-7 have been amended. Support for all amendments can be found in the specification and Claims as originally filed. Thus, no new matter has been added.

Claim Objections

Claims 4-7 stand objected to as being in improper form because Claims 4-7 are multiple dependent Claims that depend from multiple dependent Claims. Applicants have amended Claims 4 and 5 to remove multiple dependency. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's objection and rejoinder of these Claims are respectfully requested.

Claims 6 and 7 are independent claims which do not include multiple dependency. Therefore, Claims 6 and 7 are improperly objected to and rejoinder of Claims 6 and 7 is respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,706,804 to Resendes in combination with U.S. Patent No. 6,608,125 to Cruse et al. (hereinafter "Cruse").

The Examiner alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the filled halobutyl elastomer of Resendes by replacing the silazane compound with the blocked mercaptosilanes compounds of Cruse. Applicants respectfully disagree.

As conceded by the Examiner, Resendes does not teach or suggest the use of at least one protected thiol modifier as recited in independent Claim 1. Cruse fails to cure this deficiency because Cruse fails to teach or suggest the use of halobutyl elastomers in combination with protected thiol modifiers. Therefore, Cruse fails to provide motivation to modify the filled halobutyl elastomer of Resendes to include protected thiol modifiers. In particular, Cruse provides an extensive list of polymers that may be used in combination with the blocked mercaptosilanes of Cruse (col. 15, lines 17-59).

CH-8354

-4-

However, halobutyl elastomers are clearly absent from this list. Therefore, the skilled artisan would not immediately assume that halobutyl elastomers can be used in combination with the blocked mercaptosilanes of Cruse, nor would the skilled artisan have a reasonable expectation of successfully preparing a filled halobutyl elastomer by combining the components of Resendes with the blocked mercaptosilanes of Cruse.

Furthermore, Cruse teaches that a deblocking agent is required to couple the filler to the polymer (see col. 12, lines 42-44 and step B of the process col. 14, lines 52 – col. 15, line 11 of Cruse). The current claimed composition requires no such deblocking agent. Applicants submit that one of ordinary skill in the art could not predict that a reaction between a polymer, blocked mercaptosilane, and a mineral filler could occur without a deblocking agent based on the combined teachings of Resendes and Cruse. Thus, this combination of references fails to render the current claimed invention obvious.

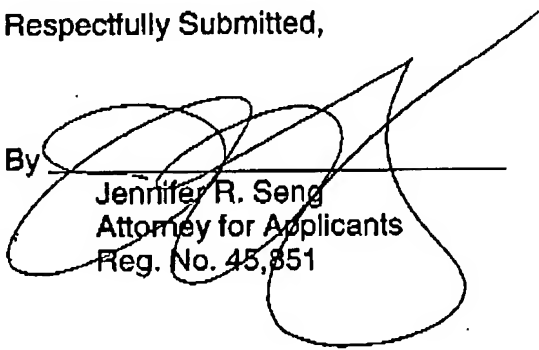
Therefore, Resendes in combination with Cruse fails to provide a reasonable expectation of successfully preparing the filled halobutyl elastomer of the current claimed invention, and fails to teach or suggest preparing a filled halobutyl elastomer in the absence of a deblocking agent. Accordingly, this combination of references fails to render the current claimed invention obvious. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants submit that the pending Claims are in condition for allowance and respectfully request notice to such effect. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the current claimed invention, he is invited to initiate a telephone conference with the undersigned.

Please note, the USPTO is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required by this paper and/or to credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2527.

Respectfully Submitted,

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